3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 AI Sinkiang AII

trestles, over the roofs of the houses and the streets of the bazaar; this was the Titai's "Royal Road," along which he had been wont to walk between his old and new residences without soiling his feet with the dust of the bazaar. Between thirty and forty ladies of the Titai's harem were still living at the old Yamen when the blow fell; I was told that they were being treated kindly by our old friend Mr. Wang, Magistrate of the New City, in whose charge they had been placed. A horrible, toothless old major-domo of the Titai's showed us, with ghoulish gusto, over the warren-like zenana, still odorous of its late fair occupants, but turned completely upside down, looted and violated. Carpets were ripped up, upholstery torn open, tables and cupboards smashed to pieces in the search for treasure; for it was well known that the late owner had invested a large part of his ill-gotten gains in diamonds and other jewellery, mostly Russian revolution loot, which he had bought cheap from across the frontier. And everywhere was jade, great blocks of it, half-polished slabs lying about, broken cups and half-turned bangles littering the ground; for one of the Titai's industrial enterprises had been the establishment of a jade-cutting factory in his yamen, by the simple process of moving half the Khotan artisans bodily to Kashgar and forcing them to work at starvation rates on the jade brought from his mines in the upper Yarkand River basin.

Throughout the whole of that week I was greatly impressed by the orderliness of the proceedings. By the evening of the Sunday on which the Titai was captured all was quiet, and there was no disorder on the part either of the conquerors or of the conquered, who in Chinese civil war are usually more dangerous to the civilian population than their rivals. If it had been the Persia of my Kerman days, every shop in the bazaar would have closed at the first hint of trouble and half the population would have been taking refuge (*bast*) against one side or the other. As it was, the only effect of the general excitement was an all-round rise of about 10 per cent. in prices. This satisfactory state of affairs was entirely due to the thoroughness of Governor Yang's preparations and the efficiency of his lieutenants; for there is no doubt that if the dispositions of the Higher Command had been less skilful or the revenge-seeking Captain Ma less bold and swift in his movements, the course of events might have been very different. The Titai and his son, knowing that it was war to the death, were preparing to defend the New and Old Cities